

Message by H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
As UNHCR Invokes Cessation Clause, Effective July 2012,
For Liberian Refugees
February 14, 2012

Greetings to you, fellow Liberians, who are in refuge in Ghana, la Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Nigeria and elsewhere. As you know, our country has been very peaceful since 2003, and we can boast that we are in our ninth year of peace. Our country has come a long way, and we are all very proud of it.

I want to say to you that, as Liberians, you cannot remain refugees forever. Over the years, our Government has been working, along with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to assist Liberian refugees to return home.

Very soon, the international community will be announcing that because Liberia is now safe and peaceful, our people should no longer be considered refugees. At that time, your refugee status will end.

Being away so long, I know that coming home is sometimes a hard decision. Some of you may be thinking about jobs, shelter, education for your children, and so on. I want to reassure you that thousands of other Liberians have returned successfully. Many former refugees who took the bold step are today happy that they decided to come back home. A large number of them are today employed with government, private companies, local and

international NGOs or are self-employed.

My Government has been working hard to ensure that facilities and services are provided throughout the country. We have been constructing roads, schools and hospitals, and delivering basic services such as electricity and clean water.

Liberia is on the rise again. We have done a lot, but we need you to come home, with the knowledge and skills that you have acquired, so that, together, we can do a whole lot more. The contribution of every Liberian is essential.

And when you do return, we are sure that family members and friends will welcome you and assist you with temporary accommodations until you can settle down.

I am appealing to you to return and join in the efforts of your brothers and sisters to rebuild our nation. Come home and let us build Liberia together. Be assured that your Government wants you home and will help you as best as possible to rebuild a normal life. This is your time. Liberia is waiting for you. I wish you all a safe journey back home.

Thank you, and may God bless you.